The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Kisses.

"ARE kisses spirits, mother?"
Little Walter asks,
Raising great dark earnest eyes,
To others, blue as summer's skies,
That brighten for her eager boy,
Through her life of hope and joy,
And tender woman tasks.

Fearless little questioner,
What knows he of kisses?
Save caresses soft and sweet,
Each fresh hour of life to greet;
Blessing kiss of sire and mother,
Clasp of sister, hug of brother;
Thanks for baby blisses.

Happy cherished darling,
He nor knows nor cares;
Of passionate lips that press in vain,
On those that cannot glow again,
Of wild despairing kisses pressed
On damp sods where our idols rest;
'Mid sad unanswered prayers.

Can true-hearted childhood
Guess such things can be,
As kiss 'tween secret foe and foe,
As hands that clasp o'er gulfs below,
As kisses with no loving leaven,
Coldly taken, idly given,
In custom courtesy?

Can frank-hearted childhood
Dream that kindred lips,
Lips that have met a thousand times,
Warm and true as poet's rhymes,
May for each other learn to frame
Scorn or hatred, mock or blame,
Love's unwarned eclipse?

Dim not childhood's golden faith,
With such lore as this is;
Let him trust the gladness round,
Trust the love as birthright found;
Soon, too soon, the world will teach,
Stings may lurk in honeyed speech,
Treason hide in kisses.

The Temptation.

SERMON BY REV. H. GOW, B.A.

"If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."—MATT. iv., 6-7.

Have you ever considered what the three temptations of Jesus really were? The story is so strange and picturesque that any one may be pardoned whether he believed in miracles or not, for regarding it as a means of conveying facts rather than as an actual fact itself. The whole appearance of the narrative impels us to look below the surface for the meaning, and to disbelieve in its literal truth. It is best understood, I believe, if we regard it as simply one of the many parables of Jesus, a parable in which Jesus aimed to convey, by means of a fanciful story, the alternative courses of action which were suggested to his mind when he was considering what sort of life he ought to live. The interpretation of this parable, which I have long felt to be the right one, is an interpretation which I have never found elsewhere, and this fact that no one else, so far as I know, has given it, is of course very much against its probability. Nevertheless it can do no harm to state how the parable explains itself to me, and may at least set you on thinking out other solutions for yourselves. If we try to realize to ourselves the courses of action which would naturally present themselves to Jesus at the opening of his life, when his spirit had been deeply stirred by the words and personal influence of John the Baptist, we shall find that, broadly speaking, there were four kinds of life

open to him—three of these kinds of life are fancifully described in story form in the Temptations as we have it: the fourth kind of life is the one he actually adopted. The first suggestion was a most natural one. He might go back again to Nazareth and pursue his father's trade—a trade, no doubt, which he had already learnt and practised. All the many memories of home would appeal to him to come; the thought of his parents growing old, and the help that he might give them; the desire to earn his living quietly and honestly; he could see the course of life which lay before him there—an obscure, safe, placid life, full of little duties, surrounded by familiar faces; a life which none would know better than Jesus, might be one of the noblest and most heroic lives; a life to which for an unambitious, gentle character like that of Jesus, would have many strong attractions. To please and satisfy the expectations of those whom he loved most, by going back to them, this would be supremely desirable for one who had so tender and reverent a feeling towards his own father, that he gave that name to God, and whose saddest utterance in latest days, lays stress on just this fact which many sterner natures could have hardly felt, that he had *no home*. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

A second course of action, which would naturally occur to him in his state of energy, would be to throw himself into the public life of his people. They were as sheep without a shepherd; they were looking so eagerly for a leader; the oppression of their Roman conquerers was so intolerable; was it not the duty of every young man to strike a blow for the freedom of his country? We must remember too that a nature so richly endowed as that of Jesus, could not have been blind to its own powers. He must have known that he had powers of passion and of mind, which would have enabled him, if he chose, to exert a strong influence, who knows how strong, upon the destinies of his country. It is not too much to say that if Jesus had adopted this course, if he had interfered in the political life of his country, Jerusalem would not have been destroyed by Titus, and the whole succeeding history of the Jews would have been different—how different it is impossible for any historian to guess. This second course of action is one to which Jesus was constantly being tempted throughout his active life. His disciples never gave up hopes that he would employ force, and would restore the kingdom to Israel. But it seems to me unquestionable that in those heart-searching days in the wilderness, when Jesus was asking himself what he ought to do with his life, one course of action suggested to him must have been this, to throw himself into the political and military life of his time, and to fight for the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. The third course of action open to him was the very reverse of this and would occur to him as a natural reaction from it. There was in the time of Jesus a number of men who had separated themselves not only from all political but from all domestic life; these men were called Essenes, they were in fact Jewish monks. They had established themselves in small settlements in lonely places; they passed their time as Christian monks have done, chiefly in practice of worship and spiritual communion, and partly in cultivating the land on which they lived. Their fare was simple in the extreme; they drank water from the well; they eat locusts and wild honey, and berries and the corn which their own hands had raised; they were men who disliked the artificiality, the comparative luxury, and unspirituality of ordinary village or city life; they hated the discords, the violence and the greed which they found in politics. They were men, like all true monks, with much of the poet and the mystic in them; they loved the pure beauty of early summer mornings, and the peacefulness of autumn fields; they heard God's voice whispering amidst the trees of the forest, they felt his presence in the mountains, they rejoiced to live in harmony with the conies, and the wild goats, and the lilies of the field. God was to them the supreme reality; they saw him everywhere in nature, but "Only in the ways of man they found him not." There is a strange attractiveness for all of us at times in such a life, so healthy, so simple, and so free from care; a life of companionship with nature and with God. To Jesus with his strong poetic feeling, with his delicacy of perception, with his delight in simple natural things, and above all, with his joy in God, such a life must have had peculiar fascination. His great confidence in a Father who is all-powerful and all-loving would add to the

temptation. Why should I strive and cry, and waste my life in puny efforts to do good, when all the time there is a loving Father who guides his people wisely, and will bring them safely into their desired haven? That is a question that a mystic naturally asks, to whom God's love and wisdom are the supreme realities. Cannot I trust my life and the life of all other men and women to the hand of God? Why should I be careful, and anxious, and troubled about many things? God watches over all in love; even though you may cast yourself down headlong he will give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. No real harm can happen to you or anyone, and, therefore, it is good to spend our time in quiet thankfulness, in the enjoyment of nature, and in communion with God.—Now, I may be right or wrong in thinking that I find these three courses of action described in parable form, in the story of the temptation, but I do not think that I am wrong when I say that those three courses of action must almost necessarily have occurred to Jesus at the opening of his life. Should he go back to his parents and his home, should he join in the patriotic struggle of his fellow-countrymen, or should he separate himself entirely from the world, and join himself to one of the communities of Jewish monks, these are alternatives that would naturally occur to him. For my own part I think that the first alternative is shadowed forth to us by the suggestion to turn stones into bread. That phrase is a vivid and picturesque description of earning a livelihood; it is by labour to obtain living corn out of what looks like dead ground, to make uesless things useful, to convey things from where they are not wanted to where they are, or in the case of teachers, it is to so form the mind of those they teach, that what would have been dead stones to a dull intelligence, becomes living bread to a quickened feeling. The second alternative, that of going into public life, is, undoubtedly, shadowed forth by the story of the devil taking Jesus up into a high mountain, and showing him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. There is very much less difference of opinion about the meaning of this temptation than there is about the other two. It is felt by most interpreters to imply that Jesus was tempted to interfere actively in the affairs of the world, and that knowing his own powers, he realized that such action would be likely to succeed. About the third temptation there is much less general agreement. Many people take it literally, and regard it as a temptation to a "Daring miracle of display." To me, such an interpretation is a degradation of the character of Jesus, quite apart from the truth, a falsity of miracle. It shadows forth, I believe, a much more subtle form of temptation, one which can only assail a man who has a deep faith in God, the temptation to regard God as everything, and ourselves as nothing. The world will go as well whatever we do because God guides it; and we are absolutely safe whatever happens to the world, because God loves us. Our visions of hard, dangerous duties are a mere illusion. God does not need your help or mine to save his world. We may withdraw ourselves from the battle of life and fold our arms, and pass our time in thinking of his love; and thanking him for his goodness; he gives his angels charge over us whatever we may do, and in their hands they will bear us up lest at any time we dash our foot against a stone. We may take our stand upon the topmost pinnacle of the temple which our faith has raised to God, fronting the sun, full in the light of his love, and there is no danger of a fall from that giddy height of clear knowledge. It is possible to stay upon these heights which the soul is competent to gain—that is the fault of those who in all ages have devoted themselves to contemplating the eternal, and that faith is always proved false.

Now, in the few minutes that are left, I want to consider this third temptation a little more at length. It may not seem to you a temptation from which *we* run much risk. Mysticism, which I should describe as an absorbing sense of God's presence and love is not a common danger. There are not many of us who feel God so plainly that we can feel nothing else; there are not many whose belief in the all-mightiness and infinite love of God is so confident that they are tempted to leave everything to him. It is a well known phenomenon in religious history, but it is not common at the present day. But, while it is very rare to meet with a mysticism which makes everything of God and nothing of the world, it is very general to believe that real religion *ought* to mean this, and that unless it

does mean this it is worthless. I think there is an indistinct feeling in many minds that our religion is unreal if it does not comfort us completely in sorrow, and enable us to bear pain almost with pleasure, and free us entirely from all anxiety about the morrow. That mystical ideal of religion as a complete emancipator from all trouble is a false ideal. It is no reproach to our Christianity if we are sometimes bowed down with trouble, or filled with anxious fears. The ideal of religion is not and ought not to be perfect security in sorrow, absolute composure when our loved ones are in danger, perfect peace when the whole world is in confusion. There are a great many who, although far removed from the ideal, still think that *is* the ideal, and blame themselves because they cannot reach it. Now it is well to realise clearly that a feeling of relationship to the Eternal Father, even though it were as close and confident as that which Jesus felt, does not free the soul from the certainty of pain, or grief, or care; it is no ideal that we should be able to gaily thank God for everything that happens, and that we should be able instantly to feel about every event that it is all for the best. Not merely is such an attitude impossible for most of us, but we should thank God that it is impossible. A peace so perfect, a confidence so strong, would be inhuman; it would mean more loss than gain; it would escape some of the sternest, wisest discipline of life. Let it never be forgotten that no great religious teacher has ever claimed a clear, full, enduring knowledge of the Eternal. I was struck last week in reading the life of Dean Church, by a remark in a letter to his friend, Canon Mozley, about his Bampton Lectures:—"I am glad," says Dean Church, "that you have brought out so strongly in your lectures that what we know in religious matters is but the tendency to know. The idea of perfect and absolute knowledge, which is involved in so much of what is said and taught on all sides, becomes daily more and more unendurable to me." That is a bold, strong statement for a great Churchman who believed in a definite miraculous revelation of God's love. The words of the Apostle Paul are:—"Now we see as in a glass darkly." We do not understand the mysteries of life and death; we cannot always feel they are sublime. Our greatest religious teachers, from Jesus downwards, offer to us in their faith no immediate consolation for the bitterness of death, no rest from the cares of life, no unchanging gladness while we remain upon the earth. They give us glimpses of divine love, not sufficient to explain everything, not sufficient to annihilate sorrow and care, but sufficient to strengthen and encourage our soul. It would be cowardly to pray for a faith which would make us quite untroubled by any pain or sorrow. A religion which should instantly transform every event, however tragic, into a source of gladness, is an absurdity. It is the mark, not of a man, but of a frightened child, to seek for such security. For us it ought to be enough if our consciousness of God's love gives us strength in times of pain, or care, or loss, not to forget them but to bear them trustfully; not to make any quiet confident assertions, but to seek his help more eagerly. This is the supreme gift of a religion truly held; it does not make our life painless, peaceful, and serene; it makes us able to endure; it helps us to become loving and unselfish; it whispers to us in words we cannot wholly catch, but whose sound is sweet and solemn, that all things have a meaning deeper and grander than we have yet been able to understand; it speaks to us of God and love, and of a noble life, and sends us forward with a firm purpose to attain them; it gives a peace that passeth understanding; a peace we cannot explain, nor perhaps even justify; but it is a peace which dwells *with* pain and sorrow; a peace which does not try to drive them out. Such peace, such strength, such confidence can be brought into all our hearts, whether glad or sorrowful, whether anxious or at rest. Such peace and strength no event of life can take away from us; it may indeed abide with us for ever.

Shelley (an Epitaph).

An Atheist, who yearned for God with keen desire;
A foe to men, by love of man o'ermastered, as by fire;
The flesh—a leaf of Autumn, the soul—a child of Spring
In deed—an empty beggar, in thought—a royal king:
Cursed and misunderstood, a Son of Time, all permanence denying,
Doubtful of all things—in himself undoubting, and undying.

(*Translated by* LAWRENCE JACKS *from the German of* LUISE VON PLOENIES.)

Manchester College (Oxford) Letter.

[*We are glad to announce that arrangements have been made to supply the* SEED SOWER *with a monthly letter from our College at Oxford. We trust this may have the result of interesting our readers in the life and work of an Institution so important to the welfare of our Churches.*]

The epidemic of influenza has interfered greatly with the work of the second half of the term. Among the losses which it has inflicted on the University, the death of Mr. Alfred Robinson, Senior Bursar of New College, deserves especial mention here. Many friends of Manchester College may recall the scene in the large back room of 90, High Street, one October afternoon in 1889, when Dr. Drummond delivered the first address on behalf of the College in Oxford. A few Dons joined our little company, and it was hoped that some one among them might be found to bid us good speed. The discourse was ended; the President waited uneasily to see what would happen; the Master of Balliol left his seat and walked out; an air of expectancy pervaded the audience. At length a voice was heard from the back of the room. It was that of Mr. Robinson. With gentle, but earnest, tones he recognised the value of the principles of the college which Dr. Drummond had unfolded, and assured us that if we came in the spirit of Dr. Martineau our appearance would not be unwelcome. His brave and generous words have been always gratefully remembered, they were the prelude to the fuller recognition accorded to us at our opening a year and a half ago. From Mr. Robinson they meant much. It has been said since his death that in him Oxford has lost one of the guiding minds of the University; in his quiet sympathy the cause of liberalism in religion has lost precious support.

Yet one more victim in the person of Rev. C. W. Boase, Senior Fellow of Exeter. Mr. Boase died in his rooms at college on the 11th of March. In him an historian of vast and varied knowledge has been lost to the University. As for the man, the following sentence taken from the *Oxford Magazine* speaks for itself: "No Senior Fellow has ever passed away more beloved and regretted."

A University Branch of the Fabian Society has just been started, a membership of 30 to begin with. Taken into consideration the fact that each member has to subscribe to the Fabian basis, is sufficient indication that even Oxford, in spite of its Conservative instincts, has within it a strong leaven of Socialism. Three of the present students of our college have become members, and a fourth gives signs of evolution in that direction. Other Socialist societies exist in the University, *e.g.*, the Guild of St. Matthew. This society arranged this term a series of sermons in St. Paul's Church on social questions. The Revs. J. G. Adderley ("Stephen Remark"), C. L. Marson, and W. A. Morris were the preachers. The Dean of Ely was also to have come but was unavoidably prevented. The Christian Social Union is also active. The object of the Fabian Society is to bring together all Socialist members of the University.

Another Oxford Society—the Social Ethical—had Mr. Keir Hardie down to lecture on the "Unemployed." He found a very large and attentive audience. Mr. Hardie was well received—his tact and native refinement being quite a revelation. The 'varsity man had looked for a hot-headed revolutionary "bounder." He found in him a self-contained common-sense gentleman. Instead of discords all was harmony. Not every Socialist speaker at the University in the past could say as much.

Mr. Lionel Smith's Lectures on Sociology at our college have been much appreciated, the large lecture room being generally full. Somerville Hall and Lady Margaret's send us a good contingent of "women." We are pleased to see from the college report that the committee have decided to appoint a Dunkin Lecturer out of the income arising from Miss Dunkin's Trust, to lecture for a stated term of one or more years on this more and more important subject.

One of the permanent musical attractions of Oxford is the Sunday night concert at Balliol. The music is always of a very high order; but what surprises one who attends for the first time, and shocks him if he be of ultra-puritan sympathies, is the large secular element in the programme. A grand Chorale, sung by all present to the accompaniment of the organ, closes the concert and sends us to our rooms, solemnised, yet happy.

A Social Union in connection with the College Chapel has been founded this term, and has held three successful meetings. The dread of the imposition of a fine of 2s. 6d. on any member who, within a certain time, had not made the acquaintance of every other member of the society, worked wonders. The recipe can be recommended. *Nota bene!*

Our "Poz" this term was a great success. The irritating part about it is its superscription "For students only." We assure the curious that sundry etchings of our special artist would greatly amuse them, while certain articles therein contained might set them wondering.

The Western Union has revived the cause at Swindon, and Manchester College Students have been invited to aid in carrying on services there. One disadvantage of Oxford, as compared with London, is its fewer opportunities of affording students practical work during term time in the matter of supplies, and it is hoped that the Swindon movement will help to obviate this. Apart from this, however, we all rejoice at our removal to Oxford. The spirit of the university is in many respects so different from our own, and it may be that the reverence for the past it inspires, and the buoyant and joyous youth that animate its present may have both sobering and hope-inspiring influences upon us.

In our Discussion Society Mr. Jòzan brought forward a motion on Patriotism, but the house proved cosmopolitan. Mr. Wood debated on Vegetarianism, making at least one convert and strengthening the faith of another. In the Shakespeare Society Mr. Jòzan gave a paper on "King John," and Mr. Wood one on "Macbeth." It is to be regretted that this society has somehow ceased to be serious. We are beginning to think the name a mis-nomen. Our special preachers this term were the Revs. C. D. Badland, L. P. Jacks, and Frank Walters. Mr. Jacks also gave us a lecture on "Walt Whitman,' and Mr. Walters one on the

"Religion and Ethics of Shakespeare." We congratulate Mr. Austin on his obtaining the Hibbert Scholarship. The Hungarian successor of Mr. Jozan, next session, we hear is to be Mr. Edward Höfi Greeting.

Historic Notes on Midland Churches.

No. XI.—Part II.

BEWDLEY—High Street Chapel.

The Rev. Evan Jones (not to be confounded with Evan Owen Jones, of Coseley, 1804-6, Belper, 1807-) was a student of the Presbyterian College, Caermarthen, 1814-1818, and ministered at Hinckley from 1820 till 1824, when he removed to Kidderminster as master of the Pearsall Grammar School and minister of the Bewdley Chapel. Here he remained until 1858, when, becoming involved in some financial difficulty, he retired and emigrated to the United States, where he died. He was mainly instrumental in the bringing up of the Rev. William Mountford, M.A., who was born in Kidderminster and also died in America.

For a number of years a succession of devoted lay preachers did good service at this chapel. Mention must be made of Mr. Will Brooke (died 4th July, 1888, aged 66), an active member of the New Meeting, Kidderminster. For many years he conducted the Sunday service at Bewdley with great acceptance, a work only relinquished through failing health. Afterwards we find some of the young men of the Kidderminster Branch of the Guild of the Good Shepherd taking up the work, and the names and labours of Charles Stainer, George A. Payne (now minister at Knutsford), Harry Haycock (now minister at Loughborough), and George Harry Williams are still gratefully remembered at Bewdley.

Owing to deaths, removals, and other causes the resident congregation has well nigh disappeared, and at present worship is discontinued in the chapel. Burton, in his "History of Bewdley," p. 49, says that, "For many years it had a large and influential congregation."

The building, which stands back from the street, and is approached through a long passage, is a good one and was evidently built by a wealthy congregation. The interior is oval, with a gallery facing the pulpit, and old-fashioned high-backed pews.

On the walls is placed a marble tablet, with Latin inscription, which may be rendered:

"To perpetuate the remembrance of Samuel Kenrick this tablet was erected by P.P. [Dr. Prattinton?]. Literature was his delight, of manners gentle, of the supreme Being a devout worshipper, in integrity of life a bright example. He died 6th October, 1811, aged 83."

Samuel Kenrick was the third son of the Rev. John Kenrick, minister of the dissenting congregation at Wrexham, he was born at Wynnehall, Denbighshire, and educated at Glasgow from 1743 to 1750. After some years spent on the continent, as tutor to the two sons of James Milliken, of Milliken, in Renfrewshire, he settled at Bewdley and conducted a banking establishment there between 30 and 40 years, eagerly devoting his spare time to ancient and modern literature. His name appears as one of first members of the Western Unitarian Society, instituted by his nephew, the late Rev. Timothy Kenrick.

Communion plate is said to have been in the possession of this congregation so recently as 1860, although all attempts on the writer's part to discover who now holds it have failed. Possibly this article may be the means of bringing it to light.

The trustees of the chapel are members of the New Meeting, Kidderminster, and the books and papers from which many of the above details are taken are in the custody of Messrs. Talbot and Son, solicitors.

Register in Custody of Registrar-General.

I. Births and Baptisms, 1722-1823.

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George Eyre Evans,
Dodington Parsonage,
Whitchurch, in Salop.

(Next month, "Some Notes on the History of the Ministers' Monthly Meeting."

The New Christianity.

REV. WALTER LLOYD.

[From a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Midland Christian Union, March 11th.]

Christianity has undergone, in the course of centuries, so many transformations that we need not be surprised if it undergoes another one or more than one. As a matter of fact we see it undergoing several before our eyes.

In the English Church there is the liberal High Church party, which is practically the only one worth attention. It is represented by the *Lux Mundi* School. It aims at the reconciliation of dogmatic theology with modern science and criticism. It has scholarship, intelligence and earnestness, but the attempt to find a philosophical justification for dogma will fail as it always failed. Amongst the Nonconformists we have the "New Orthodoxy;" this is vague and illogical, and is based neither upon science, criticism, or philosophy, it consists in importing new meanings into old theological formulæ, and can only be regarded as a temporary and transitional movement. Then we have Christian theists, the disciples of Tolstoi, the Christian Socialists and other developments.

It seems clear that the time has come when a new departure must be made and we have to consider whether we too must find a path of our own. As a matter of fact I suppose some of us have done this already and in what I am about to say there will seem nothing original to some of my hearers. Indeed, I am not going to invent a new religion, I simply describe that which is coming into existence.

In the first place let me notice, briefly, some aspects of our new Christianity. First, those which are negative in relation to the old.

It is undogmatic. It is not based upon dogma like all the old and existing forms of Christianity.

The new Christianity will have no dogmas about Christ—and more than that it will have no dogmas about the nature of God. No definitions of the Incomprehensible. It will not profess to be able to unfold all the secret purposes of Deity. It will have no *scheme* of salvation, no mediator, no atonement.

It will give up authority. It will not refer as to an unquestioned and unquestionable authority in religious matters either to the Old Testament or the New, nor to the Fathers or the Church, nor to any more modern exponents of the mind of God.

I said, and this applies most widely, that the Bible will be given up as an authority. It is already practically given up by all but the most unenlightened and obscure sects.

"Discussion at once breaks down the yoke of fixed custom. Once effectually submit a subject to that ordeal and you can never withdraw it again. You can never again clothe it with mystery or fence it by consecration, it remains for ever open to free choice and exposed to profane deliberation"—(Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, 161.)

This has happened to the Bible. It has been brought, as never before, into the arena of discussion and can never again regain its old supremacy. Such defenders of the Old Testament as the writers of a series of essays in answer to the critics, just published under the title of *Lex Mosaica*, do not seem to grasp the position. They may succeed in finding some errors in the arguments of the critics, they may prove the existence of comparative historical accuracy where it has been questioned, but to prove by external evidence that much of the Old Testament is founded upon fact is to give up the traditional authority of the scriptures. *That* was based upon the assumption that things were true *because* they were in the Bible and they needed no corroboration; to prove that some things are true *although* they are in the Bible is altogether a different affair.

Then the *supernatural* in the proper sense of the term is abandoned. I believe in the divine but not in the supernatural. By the supernatural has always been meant, either, an exceptional divine interference with nature—or, and this most generally, the interposition of powers above nature which are not in the proper sense divine. That is to say, it meant the exercise of miraculous powers by men, or the interference of angels or demons in natural phenomena or human affairs. Well, I say the New Christianity will frankly give up this supernaturalism, miracles, angelic appearances, and Diabolism just as it has given up sorcery and witchcraft.

And it will just as frankly accept all fairly demonstrated conclusions in science and criticism, and will not be ready to cry out heresy, infidelity, atheism, at every new discovery or at every fresh hypothesis of the universe which philosophy may venture to propose. None the less I should like to say it should keep itself free even on this side and not allow itself to be bound in fresh chains by any authority, however great. We have not freed ourselves from the shackles of Moses and Paul and Augustine and Calvin to bend the necks of our intellects under the yoke of Comte or Spencer.

The positive side of the New Christianity remains to be displayed. Bearing in mind that it is, as I have said, independent of dogma, authority and miracle, it will be distinguished by more religion and less theology, less profession and more practice.

To my mind it should embrace a new trinity. It must be spiritual, ethical, and social. This is not so much a matter of course as might appear. We have in the history of the Church many examples of a spirituality which was anti-social and not always ethical. We have an ethical religion (if I may so call it) proposed which ignores spirituality, and we have a socialistic Christianity suggested which sometimes seems to lack both spirituality and morality.

Theism must remain the basis of religion. But the new Christianity will be reverent before the mystery of God. So much of the old Christianity is unconsciously irrevent that the popular representations of God and the orthodox manner of approaching Him are enough to make a truly reverent soul shudder.

The new Christianity must remain spiritual. I do not see how without this element we can have religion at all; by spiritual I mean the desire for and effort to attain fellowship, communion, union with the Deity. The spiritual element in religion is the consciousness of the soul's relationship to God, the intercourse between the spirit of man and the spirit which is immanent in the

universe. If a man were alone in the world, absolutely solitary, this spiritual religion would be none the less a reality. Indeed it can only be experienced "alone with the Alone." This is undoubtedly individualistic, it ministers to the highest development of the individual, and is the source of that transcendental power which is characteristic of Christianity. And this may be regarded as having its most perfect exemplification in the experience of Jesus.

Then the new Christianity must be ethical; but from what I have just said it will be seen why I do not hold that the ethics of Christianity by themselves constitute Christianity, and why an ethical society cannot take the place of a church. But having accepted the necessity of spirituality an equal importance must be attached to morality. Spirituality is the relation of the soul to God, morality is the relation of man to his fellows. It embraces all our rights, duties, and responsibilities, it covers, as Matthew Arnold roughly put it, "three-fourths of the conduct of life." It is scarcely to be wondered that moral philosophers lay so much stress upon ethics when we consider how much they have been neglected by some, or nearly all, sections of the Christian church. There have been so many instances of men of a professed spirituality who have disregarded morality and have made the warmth of their devotional religion a justification for the looseness of their lives and their neglect of duty. I only point out here now the commanding importance of the ethical side of Christianity,—it is not incumbent upon me to define more minutely or give you a treatise on moral philosophy—that has been sufficiently well done during the past few years by masters whom I am content to follow. But ethics alone without spirituality seem to me to lack that spark of divine fire which transforms morality into religion.

Then, finally, the new Christianity must be social; not necessarily, as so many of my friends think, socialistic or collectivist, it may come to that in time, but that is a matter of detail. But the new Christianity must have regard to our social relations, and attempt to remedy our social evils. That is to say, it must not be content with the realisation and enjoyment of an interior spiritual life; or with the bare performance of duties in accord with a utilitarian system of ethics, but it must enter sympathetically into the lives of others. Undoubtedly, if moved by this sympathy, we set ourselves to revise, not to use a stronger term, existing social conditions, we find ourselves confronted by enormous difficulties—political, economical, and natural; but the characteristic of the new Christianity will be the substitution of sympathy for indifference, and a desire to remedy for the utter callousness to social iniquity, which has for so many centuries disgraced the Christian Church. The warning I respectfully desire to give is that social reformers should not ignore religion, nor allow their socialism to swamp their Christianity. I do not believe that any good will come of efforts, however kindly or even nobly meant, if social reform is regarded as the only thing necessary, and the spiritual needs of men and the moral claims of others are treated lightly or ignored.

I may expect to hear that this brief attempted synthesis of the characteristics of the new reformation is not very new, and I do not assume it is. It is only an attempt to summarize floating thoughts. But it represents nevertheless an advance of startling dimensions. And it is not a new religion. It is the setting forth of all that is highest and most universal in the old, but it is also new so far as it rejects at the same time all the lower local and temporary adjuncts and accretions of organised and accepted Christianity. It abandons dogma, authority and supernaturalism; upon one or other of which, or a combination of all three all existing churches and sects (except our own) rest.

We may be told that this is Christianity without Christ. It is nothing of the kind, you may bathe in the stream or drink of its waters without forever reminding yourself and everybody else of the spring which is its source.

One question might be answered before it is asked, cannot the old bottles contain the new wine? Cannot existing ecclesiastical institutions and denominational systems be adapted to the new spirit? I do not see how they can be. They are all based upon dogma, authority and the supernatural, remove these and what becomes of the systems? We have seen attempt after attempt made to remodel churches from within and they have all alike failed. We may see superficial modifications and temporary adjustments, but as long as the foundations of ecclesiastical institutions remain the same there seems to be no possibility of any permanent transformation. At present they rest upon fundamental misconceptions of the nature of religion, and until these misconceptions are totally removed we are forbidden to hope for any radical change.

At the time of the reformation Erasmus failed in his splendid effort to liberalise the Catholic Church. The effect of the reformation was not entirely lost upon the Catholic Church, no doubt it was to a large extent purified by the movement, and it has never been so corrupt since, but its principles remain unchanged.

The Liberal movement in the Church of England during the first half of the present century was lost in the re-action known as the Oxford movement, and the present Liberal tendency amongst the Nonconformists, known as the new orthodoxy, will almost certainly be swamped by another re-action and a new Evangelical revival.

It is only those who are free as we are who can adapt themselves to the changed intellectual condition of the times—how far we shall succeed the future alone can show.

Dr. Chalmers beautifully said: The little that I have seen in the world, and know of the history of mankind, teaches me to look upon their errors in sorrow, not in anger. When I take the history of one poor heart that has sinned and suffered, and represent to myself the struggles and temptation it passed through—the brief pulsations of joy; the tears of regret; the feebleness of purpose; the scorn of the world that has little charity; the desolation of the soul's sanctuary, and threatening voice within; health gone; happiness gone—I would fain leave the erring soul of my fellow-man with Him from whose hand it came."

The Parables of Jesus.

LESSON-NOTES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

XII.

PARABLES OF THE "LOST."

[Read Luke xv., 1-10.]

INTRODUCTORY:—The three beautiful parables in this chapter, connected by one idea—The Lost. Lost *Sheep*—Lost piece of *money*—Lost *son*. The first two are another instance of *twin* parables, like twin stars. They represent God seeking the child he has lost; while the third represents the lost child seeking his Father. Shepherd and sheep as a parable of God and man, not new (see Psa. xxiii.; Isa. liii., 6). Moses learnt his first lessons in the care of the sheep; so did David; they were trained thus to be *human* shepherds, to feel for their flocks, to feel for each silly member of their flocks. Jesus, put on his defence for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, calls to mind a parable from the Old Testament familiar to all. The Pharisees and Scribes were offended and shocked because Jesus treated the fallen and degraded as human beings, sat by their side, shared their meals, in order to show that he did not despise them. If he had merely lectured them, and taught them as a superior, there would have been no offence. The Scribes and Pharisees were themselves teachers of the people. There is no reason to suppose that they would have repulsed a publican, who came humbly and respectfully to learn what acts of penitence he might perform for his previous misdoings, how he might atone for his faults. But Jesus, Oh! horrors! ate and drank with publicans and sinners. He put himself on their level. He identified himself with them. He behaved to them not as a master to pupils, but as a kinsman and brother. It was another mode of treatment altogether. Jesus defends himself by three parables. The first two force home the same truth—God's seeking love. The lost piece of money has to be sought like the lost sheep. The coin has on it the King's image and superscription. So man bears in himself God's image, and however defaced the coin may be, and tarnished and covered with mire, the King's image is still there. In reason, in conscience, in the sense of right and wrong, in the power to love—in these things we see the image of God.

EXPLANATORY:—V. 1.—"*Publicans*"—tax-gatherers (see Carpenter's "Life in Palestine," p. 81).

V. 2—"*Murmured*"—Rather, were loudly murmuring. "*Pharisees and Scribes*" (Carpenter, pp. 125, 135) "*And eateth with them.*"—Even their touch was regarded as unclean by the Pharisees.

V. 4—"*In the wilderness*"—In the pastures, not a barren desert but a grassy plain.

V. 5.—"*He layeth it on his shoulders*"—Literally "his *own* shoulders."

V. 7.—"*Just persons*"—spoken in severe irony. Note.—There are seasons of special joy. We rejoice more over the sick child recovering from a dangerous illness than over the healthy ones playing in the garden. Do not love more, but rejoice more. We rejoice more over the battered boat just saved from the wreck on a stormy day than over a whole fleet of boats that knew no danger. Rejoice more over the one sailor who fell overboard rescued from drowning than over all the crew safe on board.

V. 8—"*Ten pieces of silver*"—Ten drachmas, a little silver coin worth about one shilling. Sometimes worn by women as an ornamental fringe round the forehead.

V. 10.—(See note on V. 7).

LESSONS.—1. The value of the individual. Men are not saved in the mass—each one known to God, loved by God for his own sake; each one dear to God and worth a great effort to save. Each human being is a distinct person—an "I," and can never be mixed up with another. Each has his own life to live, his own responsibilities, his own relation to God. Show how great and gracious is the truth of individuality. All liberty of thought, and all political liberty have sprung from it. Every man has a right to be himself, to develope his own being. "Thou God seest *me*." Each man has a distinct place and duty in the world—each man's life is on a distinct plan. Each as it were creates an original part in the great world-drama. No one to be a mere copy.

2. The naturalness and inevitableness of God's seeking love. What else could the shepherd do? *Not* to seek the lost sheep would be to be a false shepherd. A real shepherd would be certain to go. Did not God seek to help men and save them he would no longer be God. It is his very nature to help and save. A father cannot be a father and leave a son to be lost. God must be true to himself, and to be true to himself he must act like a true shepherd.

3. The pertinacity of God.—"*Until he find it.*" Here is the grand patience and perseverance of God. Human love is baffled, wearied, exhausted, worn out, defeated. God is never defeated. He loves to the end. He will never cease to pursue the wanderer until he find him. Never daunted, never wearied, never hopeless, God seeks until he finds.

Men have narrowed the love of God by saying that the lost sheep did not mean everybody, but only those who had once belonged to the Church and had wandered. As if to correct this narrow view, an early Christian artist of the Catacombs, drawing on the walls a picture of the Good Shepherd, placed on his shoulders, not a lamb but a *kid*, the young of a goat. Goats were the emblem of the wicked, but the Shepherd loves them even as the others. (See Matthew Arnold's fine sonnet—"The Good Shepherd with the Kid."

Analyse man or society, and you will find enough evil; but put them together, set man in all its relations, get down to the resultant of all the forces of society, and you will catch sight of a total good.—*T. T. Munger.*

The Miner.

TRANSLATION FROM IBSEN.

Crash and splinter, granite rock,
Under my hammer's heavy shock !
Down must I my pathway bore
Till I smite the ringing ore.

Deep in the mountain's barren night
Gleams for me a treasure bright,—
Spreading arms of ruddy gold
Enwinding jewels rich and old.

Yea, the deep hath peace for pain !
There silence holds eternal reign.
Heavy hammer break my way
Toward that cavern hid from day !

Time was when I, a happy boy,
Gazed on the rangéd stars with joy,
I wandered 'mid the flowers of Spring,
In heaven's light, blithe carolling.

But I ceased to know the day's delight,
Mining deep in the murky night,
No sound heard I of revel or song,
As the aisles of the shaft I bored along.

When first from light of day I parted
Then, thought I—the guileless-hearted—
Me spirits of the deep shall tell
The secret of the Unsearchable.

Still, no spirit has told the lore
For which my soul did hunger sore,
In vain, in vain I peer around,
Not a ray of light breaks from the ground !

Am I lost? Nay, yonder track
To the daylight leads me back.
Ah ! but light will blind mine eyes
If again I seek the skies.

No ! to the deep I hold the quest—
The home of silence and of rest.
Heavy hammer, break my way
Toward that cavern hid from day !

Shock of hammer, shock of hammer,
Till death shall still the futile clamour.
No blessed beam of dawning shines,
No sun of hope for him who mines !

L. P. JACKS.

In the Spring.

It is Spring, laughs the blue hepatica, as it gems the garden bed ;
It is Spring, breathes the modest primrose, as it rears its virgin head ;
It is Spring, says the pure anemone, amid the vivid grass
That waves beneath the merry winds, and glitters as we pass.

The wild-birds hail the Spring-time, as they mate, and sing, and build ;
The whole great sweep of earth and sky, with Spring's gay smile is thrilled ;
Young lambs in sunlit pastures, young chickens in the croft,
Review the lovely miracle that Nature sees so oft.

And something in my heart revives, that silent, sad, and strong,
Fades all the earthly blooms for me, and jars the thrush's song,
The life that throbs in April's heart wakes every mortal thing,
And grief, with birds, and buds, and flowers, stirs freshly in the Spring.

What's in a Name ?

What's in a name? Why, listen and I'll tell.
"Rose," that means fragrance, beauty, loveliness—
A queenly flower whose presence sweet doth bless
The Earth. Who knows not that from Heaven it fell !
What's in a name? Hark thou and mark me well.
"Mother : " thus in one word may I express
Self-sacrifice, love, holiest tenderness,
Dear "home," wherein our fondest memories dwell.

A name may ring like music in our ears,
Crowding a wealth of sweetness in one strain.
A name, may brim our eyes with bitter tears,
As at the touch of piteous refrain ;
A name when time hath made its meaning sure,
For evil or for good doth aye endure.

N. A.

In the Rough.

The marble was pure and white,
Though only a block at best ;
But the artist, with inward sight,
Looked further than all the rest,
And saw in the hard rough stone,
The loveliest statue the sun shone on.

So he set to work with care,
And chiselled a form of grace—
A figure divinely fair,
With a tender, beautiful face ;
But the blows were hard and fast
That brought from the marble that work at last.

So I think that human lives
Must bear God's chisel keen,
If the spirit yearns and strives
For the better life unseen.
For men are only blocks at best,
Till the chiselling brings out all the rest.

A Story of Angels.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the theological novel, which enjoys such ample success among us, is a modern invention. It is at least as old as Christianity, and is not indeed confined to any one religion. In the early Church, as in our days, people had a preference for theology made easy. In addition to the writings of the Fathers, which are of course of great value, though they are wearisome to read, some remains of the old popular literature have been preserved. Through these stories of love and sorrow, of heroes and heroines in heaven and on earth, it is possible to understand to a slight extent what the Christian *people* thought and hoped for. The story of angels that I am about to set forth, is an incident from a curious little book called "The Vision or Apocalypse of Paul." The word Apocalypse or Revelation is familiar as the title of the last book in the New Testament. But the unveiling of the secrets of the future given there is only a single specimen of a large number of similar writings, in which the authors describe what they severally imagine or dream about heaven and hell.

There are two remarks to make on this apocalyptic literature before coming to our particular story. The early Christians took a great deal more interest in heaven than in earth, and it is therefore only natural that they should desire to hear much about it, seeing that they knew almost nothing. It was a hard world in which they lived. Perhaps the world is always hard to the poor; but these were not only poor, but persecuted. The visions of the future served to relieve the tedium of the present. The pious Christian could not attend the heathen games, and had little pleasure except in thinking of heaven. In modern Europe men escape from the humdrum of their circumstances by reading books of travel, of which, since the time of Marco Polo, whose travellers' tales are still a source of amusement, there has been a large supply. In the 16th century people heard of the strange northern lands, where eider ducks grew on trees, and men carried their heads under their armpits; in the 19th, these have given place to Mahatmas, who mend broken tea cups. Of course it was known that heads were not worn in that fashion at home; neither does our crockery get itself repaired so easily. Hence the interest in hearing of lands where such things happen. The same instinct was urgent in the minds of the early Christians, making them greedy to hear of the marvels of that unknown land, which lay so far more distantly than Scotland or Thibet. The world of their fancy was a world beyond the tomb—a two-fold kingdom of bliss and woe. The accounts of hell are very horrible, and need not detain us, especially as most of them must have been incorrect. In heaven, we are told, the cities, and even the fruits, were made of gold; many of the inhabitants were of a huge stature, and had flesh coloured like the rainbow. There was an overcrowded population of angels; in place of water milk or honey or oil or wine flowed in the rivers; it was a fertile land where the rose trees grew to the size of cypresses, while their leaves perpetually gave a musical sound. In one respect it was like earth—the children play in heaven. The play-ground is a beautiful meadow covered with sweet violets and other flowers; there they play, running about in pretty white shoes, and drinking when they are thirsty from golden goblets.

There is another and more serious explanation of the popularity of these tales. They not only satisfied curiosity, but also nourished hope. In the heathen world in which Christianity grew up, men only half believed in a future life; the Christians quickly came to believe in it with all their hearts. They were not always wisely taught, and some of the stories would seem to us quite absurd, but it was a great achievement to alter the world's thoughts about death, and make them wholly bright, instead of largely sad. Take the heathen view; it varied greatly in different men. One says, "no one shall turn me from my hope in immortality;" another, "once you were not, now you are, again you will cease to be." There is a curious epitaph, partly in prose and partly in verse: Petronius, the dead man, sings of the future world to which he is going, and then adds that the tomb is his last dwelling: "Here I rest, here I shall always rest." Here is the poetry and prose of death, doubt, and faith. The Christian teachers were never in doubt about immortality; the people, perhaps, were not quite so certain; their old heathen ideas lingered on for a while by the side of the new faith; but by degrees, and in most cases,

this confusion passed and gave place to the glad hope that there would be "life after death, life in God, eternal life." When they were tortured they cried "blessed punishment, vision more precious than gold, I desire to die in the name of Christ, the saviour of souls and helmsman of bodies." In the cemeteries there are many expressions of this new faith, and many paintings which symbolise it. It is only natural that men who believed and suffered for the hope of heaven should be anxious to be told about it, and although those who told them knew no more than the rest, it is not strange that they should have been believed.

The vision of Paul, from which the story of the angels is taken, is intended to teach the lesson that heaven is only open to some; the bad will not go there. Without believing all the details, we may find something beautiful and instructive in the account of the death-bed and the judgment which I now give in a rather shortened form. A note may be useful as to the "spirit" that is mentioned. It was believed that man consisted of a body and a soul, into which a spirit was sent after birth by God. This spirit was always good and did not share in the sins of a bad man.

"And the Angel said to me: 'Follow me, and I will show you the place of the just, where they are brought after death; and afterwards I will bring you to the abyss, and will show you the souls of sinners in the place to which they are brought.' And I went forth after the Angel, and he led me into heaven, and I beheld pitiless angels, whose faces were full of fury, whose teeth stretched beyond their mouth, whose eyes shone like the morning star, and from the hairs of their heads, and from their mouths, went forth sparks of fire. And I questioned the Angel, saying, 'Lord, who are these?' And the Angel answering, said to me, 'These are commissioned to the souls of the impious in the hour of their necessity, who believed not in the Lord, their keeper, neither had hope in him.' And I looked on high, and saw other angels; their faces shone as the sun; their loins were girt with golden girdles; they were clad in vestments on which was written the name of the Son of God; they were gentle and pitiful. And I asked the Angel: 'Lord, who are these?' And the Angel answering, said to me: 'These are the angels of justice, who are sent to bring the souls of the righteous in the hour of their necessity, who believed in the Lord, their helper.'

"And I said to the Angel, 'I would see the souls of the righteous and the wicked as they leave the earth.' And the Angel answering, said to me, 'Look down on the earth.' And I looked down from heaven, and saw the whole world, and it was as nothing in my sight; and the sons of men, as nothing. And I marvelled, and said to the Angel, 'Is this the greatness of man?' And the Angel answering, said to me, 'It is.' And I said to the Angel, 'I would see in what manner the souls of the righteous and the wicked go out from their bodies.' And I looked and saw the whole world; men were dying, and they were as nothing. And I watched a certain man, who was on the point of death. And the Angel said to me, 'He whom you see was righteous.' And I saw all the works that he had done for the name of God, and all his desires, both those that he remembered, and those that he had forgotten; all stood in his sight in the hour of his necessity. And I saw the soul set forth on its journey, and it found rest and refreshment. But before it left the earth there stood over it angels—holy and impious angels. I saw them all; the impious angels found no place of habitation; the holy angels ruled it, and directed its course when it left the body, saying, 'Soul, take note of thy body, whence thou hast gone out, for thou must needs return into the same body in the day of resurrection to receive the things promised to the righteous.' Then receiving the soul from the body they kissed it, saying, 'Go boldly, for thou hast done the will of God on the earth.' Likewise also the Spirit came behind it and said, 'Fear not, O soul, neither be disturbed when thou comest into a place that thou hast never known; I will be thy helper, for I found a place of refreshment in thee while thou wast dwelling on the earth.' And the angels led it forward to worship before God. And immediately Michael and the whole army of angels fell down at the feet of God worshipping, and saying, 'This is the God of all who made men in his own image and likeness. But the angel of the soul ran forward, saying, 'O God, this is the soul whose works I recounted to thee, which did, according to thy judgment; remember his works.' The Spirit likewise said, 'I am the vivifying Spirit; I had refreshment in

this soul while I dwelt in it, for it did according to thy judgment.' And the voice of God came, saying, 'Inasmuch as this soul has not caused me to sorrow, I will not cause it to sorrow; for as it had mercy, I will have mercy.' Therefore was that soul delivered to Michael, the Angel of the Covenant, to be led forth into the paradise of rejoicing, that it also might become co-heir with all the saints. And after this I heard voices—a thousand thousand angels, and arch-angels, and cherubim, and the twenty-four elders, hymning, glorifying God, and saying, 'Righteous art thou, O God, and just thy judgment.'

"And the Angel said to me, 'Look down again upon the earth and behold the soul of an impious man going forth from its body. He angered God day and night, saying, 'I know nothing better in this world, therefore I will eat and drink and enjoy the good things of life. For who has decended into hell and returned to denounce against us that judgment of which they talk?' And I looked again, and saw all the sinner's contempt of good, and his works; all stood before him in the hour of his necessity. Then I said, 'It were better for him if he had never been born.' And after these things, the holy and the malignant angels came together; but the holy angels found no place in him. The malignant angels, who were about to lead the soul forth from the body, threatened it, saying, 'O, wretched soul, look well upon thy flesh, for thou must needs return into thy flesh in the day of resurrection to receive the punishment of thy sins.' And when they had led it forth, the familiar angel of the soul came forward and said, 'O, wretched soul, daily I recounted to the Lord thy works, what thou didst day and night. If I had had my own way, not for one day would I have served thee, but the just judge is pitiful, and he himself commanded that we should not cease ministering to thee that at length thou mightest regret.' Let us go to the just judge. And I heard a voice saying, 'Bring the wretched soul before God that it may know whom it has despised.' When, therefore, it had entered heaven, all the angels saw it, and exclaimed, 'Woe to thee, wretched soul; what answer wilt thou give when thou comest to worship before God?' Then the angel of the soul answered, 'Weep with me, beloved, for I have found no rest in this soul.' And the angels answered, 'Away with such a soul from our midst, for from the time it came in its stench has reached us.' And it was brought into the sight of God. And the Angel said, 'Lord, God Omnipotent, I am the angel of this soul, day and night I recounted to thee its works, that they were not according to thy judgment.' And the voice of God came, saying, 'Where is thy fruit which thou hast produced worthy of the good which thou hast received?' And the soul answered, 'I have not sinned.' And I heard the Lord God, the righteous judge, saying again, 'Come angel of this soul, and stand in the midst.' And the angel of the sinful soul came, having a writing in his hands, and he said, 'These, O Lord, are the sins of that soul from youth, from its tenth year until to-day; and if it be thy will, I will relate his actions from the fifteenth year.' And the Lord God said, 'Angel, I do not ask for the reckoning from the fifteenth year, set forth only his sins during the last five years before his death.' Then the Angel, producing his witnesses, said, 'Soul, confess what thou didst to these souls.' And the soul answering, said, 'It is not yet a full year since I slew this one.' And the voice of God came again, saying, 'Therefore is this soul delivered to Tartarucho, who is over the punishments, and he will send it into the outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and it will be there until the great day of judgment.'

"And after these things I heard the voices of angels and arch-angels, saying, 'Righteous art thou, O God, and just thy judgment.'"

I offer this incident as a specimen of the literature, which certainly yielded pleasure, and was, as we may hope, a source of profit to those who preceded us in the great religious movement of the western world.

B. KIRKMAN GREY.

We recently heard it said of a young man who belonged to a church, that, "He ought *to be turned out.*" And we thought—*out where?* Out among the wolves? Out into the pitiless world? Out from Christian influences? No. Rather keep him in the army. Dig a ditch and save him. The breath spent in censure might be turned into prayer on his behalf. The effort put forth to expel him might better be spent in making a channel for redeeming grace. It is more soldierly to save a comrade than to destroy an enemy. God will always send down the saving power.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Hollow Oak.

1. In the green forest I heard an oak sigh,
"I am leafless and hollow, dear world, good-bye."

2. Whispered a soft breeze passing so near,
"While sweet life is left there is use for all here—

3. "For all things on earth, early or late,
If they only are willing to watch and to wait."

4. For still the oak fretted, fluttered, and cried,
"What use? I am hollow, all hollow inside."

5. Came by a maiden fair, sweet four years old,
Her bright face, all rosy, crowned with soft gold.

6. Strayed in the forest through the long day,
Strayed till the sunshine turned to cold grey.

7. Strayed till the pink cheek faded to white,
Strayed till the little feet failed her quite.

8. Strayed till the daisies folded to rest,
And each tiny birdie lay still in its nest.

9. Oh, for a shelter shielding from cold!
One stood already, a tree bent and old.

10. Into its hollow heart baby-girl crept,
There, on a bed of leaves, peacfully slept.

11. Slept in its shadow, shaded from ill,
While the pale moonlight beamed holy and still.

12. Slept while the nightingale sang its last song;
Slept in sweet safety all the night long.

13. With the first dawning mother came nigh,
Grief in her troubled heart, tears in her eye.

14. "Baby! my baby-girl! lost, lost, I fear!"
Answered a laughing voice, "Mother, I'm here."

15. "Here in a pretty bed hid in a tree;
Kind fairies made it ready for me.

16. "Lined it with mosses as though they had known
Mother's wee darling must sleep here alone."

17. She laid her red lips on the oak, brown and dry,
And, kissing it softly, said, "Old tree, good-bye."

18. The faded leaves fluttered with pleasure elate,
"There *is* use for the weakest that watch and that wait."

Lullaby.

THE red sun is sinking,
And father at sea
Is sure to be thinking
Of baby and me.

The sou'-west is blowing,
The breakers are high;
May God guard his going,
If danger is nigh.

Whilst father is keeping
His watch in the storm,
And mother is weeping,
Our baby sleeps warm.

When winter is over,
And spring decks the lea,
May winds waft our rover
To baby and me!

Our Darling.

1. BOUNDING like a foot-ball,
Kicking at the door;
Falling from the table-top,
Sprawling on the floor;
Smashing cups and saucers,
Splitting dolly's head;
Putting little pussy cat
Into baby's bed.

2. Building shops and houses,
Spoiling father's hat;
Hiding mother's precious keys
Underneath the mat;
Jumping on the fender,
Poking at the fire;
Dancing on his little legs—
Legs that never tire—
Making mother's heart leap
Fifty times a day;
Aping everything we do
Every word we say.

3. Shouting, laughing, tumbling,
Roaring with a will;
Anywhere and everywhere,
Never, never still.
Present—bringing sunshine;
Absent—leaving night;
That's our precious darling,
That's our heart's delight.

News from the Field.

MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION.—The annual meeting of the Midland Christian Union was held on Monday, March 12th, at Newhall Hill Church, the Rev. Joseph Wood (president) occupying the chair.—The annual report (read by the Rev. A. A. Charlesworth, secretary) stated that the committee regretted that the income of the Union was still inadequate to its needs. The churches at Small Heath and Wolverhampton had involved, and would continue to involve, a large increase in expenditure. The cause started at Small Heath had been well maintained during the year, in the face of many difficulties. It had given signs of vigour and permanent strength. The other aided churches continued to do a good work, and merited as well as ever, some better than ever, the support which had been given. No diminution of expenditure could be made if the work of the Union was to be effectively maintained. In addition to this, it must be pointed out that in special cases the committee found itself crippled, and was unable to give help which was richly deserved. The committee regretted the death of the Rev. L. G. Harris Crook, late missionary minister at Wolverhampton, and welcomed the Revs. L. P. Jacks, J. Hall, and B. K. Gray to the district.—The Treasurer reported that the income of the Union for the year amounted to £477 19s. 8½d., and the expenditure to £492 6s. 3d., leaving a balance on the wrong side of £14 6s. 6½d.—The president, in moving the adoption of the report, said it was a very modest record of work. A little had been done here and there, but nothing to boast of. Nevertheless he did not know any year since he had been familiar with the history of the Union when the report had been more encouraging. There had been signs of progress, slight but unmistakable. There had been, here and there, complaints of depression and something like stagnation, and they knew full well how disheartening were the conditions under which some of the churches existed, and under which some of their fellow-ministers laboured, and it was a matter of great regret to the committee that they were not able to aid in a more substantial manner the struggling churches. It would give them the greatest pleasure to disburse twice the amount of money; and he appealed, therefore, for a larger income to enable them to do so. Unless such an increase took place a reduction would have to be made in the grants to the churches. He did not think there was ever a generation in the history of Nonconformity in which it was such a good thing to live as the present day, and he thought their churches never before had such opportunities before them or such responsibilities laid upon them. There were causes at work which made for them, if they would frankly recognise them. There was a larger degree of moral earnestness in the community than ever before in the history of this country, for a public opinion and social earnestness was arising which was on their side, and if they did their work with enthusiasm a great future was before them.—Mr. Nightingale seconded, and the report was adopted.—On the motion of Mr. Oliver (Shrewsbury), the officials of the Union were reappointed, with Mr. Wood as president, and the Rev. A. A. Charlesworth as secretary.—The Rev. J. C. Street moved "that this annual meeting of the representatives of the free Christian Churches of the Midland Counties, in public meeting assembled, hereby records its satisfaction at the introduction by the Government of the Welsh Church Disestablishment Bill—(hear, hear)—and at the support given by them to the Burials Bill introduced by Mr. Carvell Williams, and it earnestly calls npon them to use all legitimate efforts to carry the same into law during the present session of Parliament." He said doubtless such a resolution sent to the Prime Minister would show that the free Christian Churches of the Midlands were in full sympathy wlth the progressive legislation which was now being submitted to the country. They were not in favour of taking from the majority that which belonged to the nation, and setting it aside simply for the use of minorities. They were, therefore, not in favour of the Established Church in Wales. They knew that the great majority of the inhabitants of that part of the country supported their own churches with such liberality as their circumstances allowed, and it was an injustice that the wealth of the principality should be diverted from the use of the whole body of the people to the use of those who were its most affluent members. With regard to the Burials Bill, he thought they had come to the conclusion that it was time the differences which now existed in cemeteries and churchyards should cease. This resolution was also seconded and adopted.—The Rev. Walter Lloyd (Gloucester), then read a paper on "The New Christianity," which was followed by a discussion. We give a full report of Mr. Lloyd's paper in another place.—Tea was subsequently served in the Schoolroom. After tea, service was held in the Church, when the Rev. C. Hargrove, M.A., of Leeds, preached a remarkable sermon on "Zeal." The meetings, as a whole, were very satisfactory.

BIRMINGHAM: THEOLOGICAL LECTURES.—On Wednesday, March 20th, Professor Estlin Carpenter concluded a course of eight lectures on "The First Three Gospels, their Growth and Meaning." The lectures have been of a deeply-interesting nature, and have attracted large audiences. Although the charge for the course was five shillings, 140 tickets were sold, and the success of the movement will no doubt encourage the promoters to arrange for another course. One gratifying feature of the lectures has been the presence of a number of outsiders —clergymen and others. At the close of the last lecture a vote of thanks to Professor Carpenter was proposed by the Rev. L. P. Jacks, and seconded by Mr Alderman Johnson.

BIRMINGHAM: DOMESTIC MISSION, HURST STREET.—On Sunday, March 10, the annual prize distribution in connection with the junior Sunday Schools took place, an interesting service being conducted and an appropriate address delivered by Mr. W. J. Clarke, by whom the prizes were distributed. In the morning there was a crowded attendance of members of the Sunday Morning Adult Class, the average attendance at which has now reached 360. Mr. Clarke delivered an address on the subject of the Lord's Prayer, which was followed by an

exceedingly instructive and interesting lesson on the subject of "Thrift," by Mr. Burton Green, the Secretary of the National Thrift Society. The recent severe weather and the acute distress resulting therefrom, have imposed a vast amount of work and a very severe strain upon the working staff of the mission. Since the Police Aided Association began on December 17th last, upwards of 3000 destitute children have been clothed. In addition to this between seventy and eighty military veterans have received assistance weekly in connection with the Military Veterans' Movement. The administrative work of both these associations is done by the staff at Hurst Street, our missionary, Mr. W. J. Clarke, acting as hon. sec. to both agencies. Quite apart from this, and from the work of the agencies directly connected with the mission, the special relief measures, necessitated by the prolonged frost during these last few weeks, have involved some very heavy additional labours, no less than 2,700 cases having been relieved in various ways since the beginning of February.

EVESHAM.—The usual tea-meeting following upon the annual meeting of the congregation was held in the schoolroom on 14th March, when 110 were present. In an interval in a programme of instrumental and vocal music, the Rev. Rudolf Davis spoke of the life and work of the congregation during the year; and the Treasurer, Mr. Geoffrey New, of its financial affairs. The principal events during the past year have been—in May the meeting of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of Worcestershire, Warwickshire, and Neighbouring Counties, when the Rev. Joseph Wood preached. In June, the visit of the Midland District Sunday School Association. The business meeting was held in the afternoon, and after tea (provided by the teachers and friends), a paper was read by the Rev. Rudolf Davis, on "The Teaching of Religion," discussion following. In June also, by the kindness of a few friends, in the congregation, the choir made a delightful excursion to Malvern. In the same month the Sunday School services were held, the evening service being a flower service, and large quantities of flowers were sent to missions in Birmingham and London. During the winter, on Monday evenings, the Boys' Club has met in the schoolroom, learning wood-carving, fret sawing, and basket making. The number of applications for admission has been greater than the accommodation. On Tuesdays the Girl's Club, at which toys have been made for the Children's Hospital in London. On Wednesdays, a congregational Social Meeting—games, music, and friendly intercourse; the library of novels has been much used. The average attendance has been rather over 30. On alternate Thursdays a service has been held in the schoolroom, attended chiefly by working women to the number of between 20 and 35. On Fridays a class for boys who have left school, and the choir practice. During the winter, monthly lectures on "A Rational Theology and the Religious Life" have been held on week-day evenings. Before the beginning of the course a circular letter was addressed by the officers of the congregation to members of other churches, inviting them to attend these lectures and learn something of the faith of members of our congregations. The response has been gratifying. The attendance at the lectures has varied from 80 to 130, and among the audiences have been members of the English and Roman Catholic Churches, and of the Society of Friends, Baptists, Wesleyans, and Congregationalists. The Rev. L. P. Jacks began the course with a lecture on "Some First Principles of Religious Life and Fellowship," Rev. Joseph Wood lectured on "The Religion of Jesus," Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans on "Inspiration and Infallibility," and Rev. J. Edwin Odgers on "Free Church Principles and Unitarian Doctrines." The congregational sewing meeting has met fortnightly during the winter, the members in turn providing tea. In February a number of poorer neighbours and friends were invited to tea by the members, and after an entertainment each guest received some useful garment. In January the members of the choir and the younger members of the congregation were invited to a party and dance in the school-rooms. The congregation has sustained a loss in the death, on the 15th March, of its oldest member, Mr. Anthony New, a constant attendant at its services, and a supporter of its institutions. On March 19th prizes for regular attendance at Sunday School during 1894—26 to girls and 31 to boys—were distributed by Mr. W. Hunting, formerly for a long period superintendent of the school. Owing to the crowded state of the schoolroom on previous occasions, the teachers this year engaged the Merchants' Hall, which was filled by the children and their parents and friends, about 400 being present. It was reported that while the number of scholars on the books had not increased, since the school had been over full before, and with regret admission had necessarily been refused to several applicants, still the average attendance, both morning and afternoon, had been steadily increasing during the last two years. Also the amount deposited in the Savings' Bank had risen from £75 in 1892, and £83 in 1893, to £93 in 1894. After the prize distribution an entertainment of recitations, songs, dialogues, and dramatic scenes was given by the children.

LYE.—During the past month lectures and discourses have been given by Mr. Taylor, of Stourbridge, and the Rev. A. A. Charlesworth and I. Wrigley. These have been greatly appreciated, and on the last two Sundays the attendance has been remarkably good. One large classroom is nearly finished and will be opened shortly. The following additional contributions to the Extension Fund have been received: Two Friends (per Mr. J. Stych, 2s. 6d. each) 5s., Mr. J. Stych (Birmingham) 5s. Total amount subscribed £230 13s. 6d.

WHITCHURCH.—The last of the six special winter services at the Church of the Saviour was held on Wednesday, March 7th, when the Rev. Joseph Wood, President of the Midland Christian Union, in which Provincial Assembly this congregation is included, preached to a good congregation. With the aid of a grant of £2 from the B. and F.U.A. for printing, the congregation has met the travelling expenses of the ministers and all other charges, and looks forward to a further course of services next winter.